
Citation:

Smith, VL and Font, X (2014) Volunteer tourism, greenwashing and understanding responsible marketing using market signalling theory. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22 (6). 942 - 963. ISSN 0966-9582 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.871021>

Link to Leeds Beckett Repository record:

<https://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/id/eprint/7/>

Document Version:

Article (Accepted Version)

The aim of the Leeds Beckett Repository is to provide open access to our research, as required by funder policies and permitted by publishers and copyright law.

The Leeds Beckett repository holds a wide range of publications, each of which has been checked for copyright and the relevant embargo period has been applied by the Research Services team.

We operate on a standard take-down policy. If you are the author or publisher of an output and you would like it removed from the repository, please [contact us](#) and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Each thesis in the repository has been cleared where necessary by the author for third party copyright. If you would like a thesis to be removed from the repository or believe there is an issue with copyright, please contact us on openaccess@leedsbeckett.ac.uk and we will investigate on a case-by-case basis.

Volunteer tourism, greenwashing and understanding responsible marketing using market signalling theory

Submitted to the journal of sustainable tourism

Abstract: Volunteer tourism has been heavily criticised for its negative consequences on destinations and volunteers, often the direct result of unrealistic demand-led marketing and lack of consideration for the environmental and social costs of host communities. While some industry participants have responded through adherence to best practice, little information or support is available about how to responsibly market volunteer tourism. This research uses an online content analysis based on the International Voluntourism Guidelines for Commercial Operators to understand the use of responsibility as a market signalling tool. Five influential web pages of eight organisations are scored across 19 responsibility criteria and compared against the organisation's legal status, product type and price. We find that responsibility is not used for market signalling; preference is given to communicating what is easy, and not what is important. The status of the organisation is no guarantee of responsible practice, and price and responsibility communications display an inverse relationship. We conclude volunteer tourism operators are overpositioning and communicating responsibility inconsistently, which highlights greenwashing, requiring at least industry-wide codes of practice, and at best, regulation. This paper reflects on its methodological limitations, and on its practical achievements in encouraging change within some of the organisations examined.

Victoria Smith is a graduate from the MSc Responsible Tourism Management at Leeds Metropolitan University.

Dr Xavier Font is Reader at the International Centre for Research in Events, Tourism and Hospitality at Leeds Metropolitan University. His research focuses on understanding reasons for pro-sustainability behaviour and market based mechanisms to encourage sustainable production and consumption.

Introduction

Volunteer tourism (VT) is a hybrid concept, bringing together international volunteering and tourism, “the practice of individuals going on a working holiday, volunteering their labour for worthy causes” (Tomazos, 2009a:196). VT is often promoted as a way to experience authenticity within the context of an alternative tourism beneficial to destinations, leading to expectations of a responsible tourism ethos. The purpose is often “aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society; the restoration of certain specific environments or research into aspects of society or environment” (Wearing, 2007:1) alongside touristic activities. However, as VT grows in popularity, the true value and costs with regard to the triple bottom line are being called into question (Goodwin, 2011; Wearing, 2001).

VT organisations have come under criticism for being overly profit-driven, over-promising benefits, harming destinations and creating customer dissatisfaction (Benson and Henderson, 2011; Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004; Tomazos and Cooper, 2012). In this issue of this journal, Taplin, Dredge and Scherrer (2014) outline a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess VT’s activities. The problems begin at the marketing stage. Seemingly altruistic marketing messages are masking increasingly commercial operations. It is arguable whether any form of tourism, or indeed volunteer tourism, is totally sustainable, but it is morally imperative that operators take responsibility for managing their products and operations, and encourage their customers to take steps to become more sustainable (Goodwin, 2011). While it is not possible to reach a conclusion on the debate on the relationship between these two concepts, we refer in this paper to responsibility as a process, and sustainability as the direction.

This research contributes to understanding the image of responsibility that companies choose to project about themselves on their websites. It analyses market signalling about taking responsibility as practiced by a sample of UK-based VT organisations, and compares it to price signalling to present perceptual maps of Responsibility Value. Website analysis only reflects a fraction of what an organisation does, but web sites are purposefully created and project images for the purpose of attracting customers hence signalling to the market those attributes which they believe influence purchase decisions. The paper sheds light on the way that VT is marketed: it could also help guide future researchers looking at how

marketing uses the terms responsible and sustainable tourism generally. On a broader scale it addresses the contentious issue of “greenwashing” in tourism marketing.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First, we outline the concept of market signalling, outline the literature on volunteers’ motivations and consider the potential for responsible market signalling. We then move on to review the literature on how VT operators have responded with vague responsibility signals. The methods section justifies choices and outlines the process of the content analysis of a sample of web pages and how eight VT operators were sampled. We present the results of this content analysis and display the Responsibility Value of three volunteering products and overall performance, before discussing the meaning of these results in the context of the volunteering and the market signalling literature.

Literature review

Volunteer tourists face an increasing choice of suppliers who offer an overwhelming and undifferentiated choice of projects abroad, with greater or lesser itinerary trade-offs between altruism and hedonism (Coghlan, 2007; Tomazos & Butler, 2009a; Tomazos and Cooper, 2012; Wearing, 2001). VT operators aim to differentiate their products through marketing, choosing how to position their brands and products. While marketing is not wholly responsible for the impacts of VT, marketers have a “special responsibility” (Krippendorff, 1987:138) in influencing, leading and managing consumer desires and expectations.

If demand places a utilitarian value on the resources that its VT experience is based on, conventional profit-based marketing will be largely inconsiderate of environmental and social costs and returns (Belz and Peattie, 2012; Kotler and Lee, 2011). Because sustainability superficially conflicts on many levels with marketing (Grant, 2007), it is important to consider its role in improving behaviour towards a consumer service product to achieve mutually rewarding social and organisational objectives (Dinan and Sargeant, 2000; Goodwin 2011). Kotler and Lee (2009) argue that “real” positioning and “total marketing” works on all aspects of the marketing mix and is communicated through a unique selling proposition’s bundle of values which represents the critical differentiating factor for consumers’ product discrimination, communicating a holistic commitment to

sustainability. VT operators' selling propositions are made up of signals that are meaningful to the market. Responsibility communications could have a positive effect on consumer beliefs, attitudes and motivations; they have the potential of fitting well with the company's *raison d'être* if they are altruistic and not profit-motivated (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore and Hill, 2006). Like most services, VT is evaluated at the point of purchase via extrinsic cues (marketing, brand, recommendation) since intrinsic cues (the product itself) cannot be tested by the customer (Zeithaml, 1988).

This paper uses signalling theory to solve information asymmetries between buyer and seller to reduce purchasing uncertainty. Signals are the observable, alterable attributes that the business can invest in to communicate superior but unobservable or hidden ex-ante and complex attributes of the product being offered, which are primarily quality and the promise of customer satisfaction (Spence, 1973). Signalling costs for the seller, including the efforts required to make the signal, are considerable. This is a type of "bond" paid, because of the investment wasted if the signal is false or does not function (Ippolito, 1990). Typical quality signals include brand name, price, warranty and advertising expenditure, to convey positive messages about quality (Kirmani and Rao, 2000). When signalling reaches certain costs for the seller (including level of difficulty or time invested), low performing businesses will not signal. Independent auditing of how responsible VT organisations are would have a higher signalling bond than the current unregulated claims. This bond is a guarantee of quality and also signals an investment from the company. It would be expected that companies signalling would have a higher price. In our case, the bond would be the Responsibility Value displayed by the company, as the relationship between signalling responsibility and price.

Understanding what motivates tourists to volunteer is key to their product and brand choices, and to which signals they will respond (Callanan and Thomas, 2005). The literature suggests that responsibility will be a key market signal. There is general consensus that voluntourists' main priority is to genuinely have a positive impact on a less developed community, and an aid narrative seems to be central to the marketing of most volunteering providers (Palacios, 2010). A VT company must take responsibility for (1) marketing a sustainable product (e.g. putting the community first, ensuring there is a lasting impact, working with locals, respecting heritage and wildlife...) and (2) targeting a segment that is appropriate for the product (e.g. ensuring an appropriate match between volunteer skills

and destination needs, conducting a needs assessment, ensuring volunteers behave appropriately...) (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Weeden, 2002).

Grimm and Needham (2012) found that the environmental concepts and buzzwords that were particularly important to volunteer decision making – as volunteers searched for projects and explanations of what was important to them - included “sustainability,” “conservation,” “reforestation,” and “community development.” These volunteers felt impressed by the density of buzzwords used in the marketing materials, but there was little evidence of these volunteers searching for evidence of how the volunteer project went about achieving their claims. We also know that volunteers prefer financial gain to benefit destinations rather than First World profit-makers and attach value and trust to the status of non-profit or charitable organization (Tomazos and Butler, 2009a).

VT can also have more self-centred motivations, suggesting that complementary or alternative market signals would also be important search attributes. There is a desire amongst volunteers to learn, adding to volunteers’ personal or professional development in specific fields of interest and is therefore less than altruistic (Wearing, 2001; McGehee and Clemmons, 2008). This is closely aligned with self-realisation, using the time and space to discover, challenge and develop abilities, self-esteem, pride and enrich one’s life (Krippendorf, 1987; McGehee and Clemmons, 2008; SNV, 2009). Additionally, there is an interplay of mass tourism motives and volunteer motives, to mix adventure with restoration and re-vitalisation (Krippendorf, 1987; Wearing, 2001; Tomazos and Butler, 2012). Increasingly voluntourists narrow down their search attributes according to peer recommendations (Taillon and Jamal, 2008) or camaraderie (Brown and Hall, 2008; McGehee and Clemmons, 2008).

More worryingly, other travel motivations may clash with the requirements and consequences of volunteer work (Sin, 2009). For example, there is evidence of volunteering driven by the search for autonomous freedom, seeking out obligations and dependencies (Krippendorf, 1987; Grabowski, Wearing and Lee, 2007); mutual understanding and interest between guests and hosts, whereby “what should have been a meeting becomes a ‘zoo syndrome’, in which both sides gape at each other” (Krippendorf, 1987:60); personal beliefs, whereby VT becomes a spiritual mission to spread philosophies to hosts whose cultural beliefs may differ. And there is egoism, whereby voluntourists make themselves feel better

through an opportunity for superiority (Grabowski, Wearing and Lee, 2007; Taillon and Jamal, 2008).

Responsibility displayed by VT operators can have, therefore, a role in communicating quality to some consumers. Consumers that are sensitive to quality uncertainty will have a lower price sensitivity – for example, if responsibility matters to them, they are less likely to look for the cheapest VT company (Erdem, Swait and Louviere, 2002). Brand credibility can reduce overall perception of uncertainty, and corporate social responsibility has been successfully used to develop company brands even when it was not an important attribute for the consumer, as it contributed to an overall positive perception (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore and Hill, 2006). However the brief outline of VT motivations suggests the attributes on which consumers take purchasing decisions will be broader than responsibility.

Using Kirmani and Rao's (2000) typology of signalling bonds, we can argue that responsibility claims, like advertising, brand and reputation, would be both *default-independent* (the business spends time making the claim on their website whether the claim is true or false) and *sale-independent* signals (the business spends time and dedicates website space to responsibility claims regardless of whether the customer purchases the product). Yet signalling works best in products with (1) post-purchase information clarity (Kirmani and Rao, 2000) - that would mean that volunteers should clearly determine the responsibility quality of their experience after their stay, which is questionable. And (2), when violations of quality signalled can be established post-purchase - e.g. that the volunteer can clearly identify when the VT operator did not fulfil their responsibility claims.

One would expect claims to be true if the recovery of this bond investment depends on the repeat sales that were gained on the basis of the fulfilment of the bond's claims (i.e. volunteer tourists buy the product because of claims that their volunteering will make local people's lives better, and that volunteers' skills are matched to the projects' needs, both of which are arguably central to the purpose of volunteering). Default-independent signals are useful for repeat purchases (Kirmani and Rao, 2000) - yet volunteering has a high proportion of "once in a lifetime" customers with limited understanding of the sector and what to expect, which compounds VT's pre-purchase unobservable quality. Sending organisations confirm that volunteer tourists, in a business sense, tend to be one-off customers (they are not expected to provide repeat business for the organisation; typically their trips are considered as once in a life-time opportunities), so the priority is attracting volunteers

rather than the impact that they have on host communities (Morgan, 2010). Any potential negative impact would only come from the limited impact of word of mouth anecdotes. Signalling only truly works in repeat purchase markets (Milgrom and Roberts, 1986; Wolinsky, 1983).

Price is also a market signal and an indication of product quality (Bagwell and Riordan, 1991; Dodds and Monroe, 1985). Teas and Agarwal (2000:278) found a positive relationship between “price and perceived sacrifice, perceived quality and perceived value, and perceived sacrifice and perceived value”. Following the research suggesting a relationship between quality and price, if responsibility is important to consumers and, therefore, part of quality perceptions, we would expect a direct relationship between responsibility and price, on a responsibility value continuum.

It is common to use price as an indication of quality when customers perceive high risk in making the wrong purchase (Patterson, 1993), as would be the case of parents paying for young volunteers to volunteer in the third world for longer than an average holiday. That is because first time buyers rely on extrinsic cues, and price is used more often as quality cue when the customer is inexperienced or unfamiliar with brands, or with high involvement products when the perceived risk of making a wrong choice will be costly (Zeithaml, 1988), thus prompting volunteer operators to invest in brand equity to justify a higher price (Keller, 1993). Responsibility Value, as the relationship between signalling responsibility and the price charged will, therefore, be affected by additional consumer search attributes and VT operator practices.

Industry responses

We know that VT operators have multiple sources of market signalling to segment the market according to what is important to them, including displaying their responsibility (Dinan and Sargeant, 2000). VT operators will use a range of market signals to suggest quality. Website layout (i.e. ease of navigation) and appearance (professional look) and content (photographs, testimonials, and information) influenced volunteers' company choices (Grimm and Needham, 2012). Having reviewed whether responsibility claims may have only limited impact on consumer decision making, we now explore some of the industry responses to making such claims by outlining how hedonistic messages prevail, which explains why responsibility signalling has a low bond.

Keese (2011) reports that volunteering websites contain a high element of tourism excursions or experiences, dramatic language and, to evoke destination imagery, pictures depicting either adventure or helping. As consumer behaviour is a hedonic consumption (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982), marketing narratives, central to creating a destination or product image “reflect multi-sensory, fantasy and emotional cues” (Govers and Go, 2005:74). Commercial interests are keener to present a staged, sanitised version of the tourist experience (Choi, Lehto and Morrison, 2007; Cohen, 1988) fuelled by a hidden marketing agenda of eco-explicit greenspeak messages (Dann, 1996).

There are claims of VT organisations greenwashing (using low bond signals, in the sense that they can be easily copied without requiring a high investment), by communicating vague benefits such as “make a difference” to appeal to a wide range of potential volunteers and motivations, but with little resemblance to the real situation (Mdee and Emmott, 2008). Simpson (2004) notes that the language of development is rarely used in the gap year industry: its own brand of development discourse is preferred. . There is a neo liberalist undercurrent (Lyons *et al.*, 2012) manifested in neo colonialist development aid language (Palacios, 2010) that volunteers seek and volunteering tour operators exaggerate (Simpson, 2004). The reality may just mean securing volunteer placements (Morgan, 2010), marketed through “clichés, where the public face of development is dominated by western ‘good intentions’” which trivialise poverty and become the framework of reference for participants (Simpson, 2004:10) and where ultimately “tourism is business not charity” (Krippendorf, 1987:20).

VT *is* a business, and is becoming increasingly commodified (Lyons *et al.*, 2012). But most types of VT organizations portray themselves as ethical improvers of communities and environments regardless of their legal status. Many profess to be working with local community partners, NGOs and charities, and appear to market themselves as social enterprises who apply commercial strategies for social purpose (Mdee and Emmott, 2008; von der Weppen and Cochrane, 2012). The social benefit and “moral legitimacy” of NGOs and destination-based organisations may be assumed rather than practiced (Bowes, 2008; Mdee and Emmott, 2008; Kotler and Lee, 2009). The relative lack of commercial marketing experience of not-for-profit development organisations has enabled innovative tour operators to gain a foothold in the VT market since the 1990s, sourcing projects in destinations which they already serve (Morgan, 2010).

Wearing, McDonald and Ponting (2005) see commercial VT as an experiential commodity, valuing capitalist profits above impacts and thus never able to achieve sustainability and empowerment, versus NGO VT which they see as philanthropic, decommodified and socially appropriate. However, in the not-for-profit sector, despite good intentions, even organisations involved in foreign aid may fail to consider local needs and priorities due to “top-down planning”, creating dependency and even fostering corruption, hurting a destination’s entrepreneurship and community (Kotler and Lee, 2009). In addition, the increasing number of organisations, changing consumer attitudes, public sector austerity measures, declining international development assistance and long-term volunteer numbers have led to intense competition for support. Historically, many NGOs and charities have avoided connection with the travel industry for fear of being perceived as having commercial objectives. However some non-profit organisations now partner with travel agents and media to increase the awareness and distribution of their services. Consequently, adoption of commercial marketing techniques, such as segmentation for efficient and effective donor communications, has increased (Dolnicar and Randle, 2007), along with the use of volunteer travel for income generation for charitable development-led organisations, despite few being equipped to receive visitors and coordinate logistics effectively (Mdee and Emmott, 2008). Mdee and Emmott (2008:195) ask “to what extent can a commercially-viable travel organisation (whether a social enterprise or not) realistically engage in a critical development debate, particularly of a ‘politicised’ nature”.

Two examples of commoditisation can be put forward. A social marketing approach would consider and communicate the skills required for destination project needs, framed to educate, persuade and elicit desired proactive choice for societal change (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Dinan and Sargeant, 2000; Raymond and Hall, 2008). Yet there is evidence of not matching project needs with volunteer skills (Raymond and Hall, 2008) nor, for example, checks on appropriateness to work with children (Reas, 2013). In addition, responsible VT would occur in the places with greatest needs in terms of poverty or endangered resources. Keese’s (2011) research suggests six criteria for VT organisations to select projects: safety, need, attractiveness of the place, presence of local partners, previous staff experience and accessibility. Despite these, the type of activity and the geography of VT is highly concentrated (Keese, 2011; Tomazos and Cooper, 2012) and there is little differentiation between the projects. The outcome is that there is no relationship between “need for

assistance” (the United Nations Human Development Index score) and the location of VT projects (Tomazos and Butler, 2009a).

Method

The literature review produced mixed messages regarding the likelihood of finding a positive Responsibility Value. This research aims to understand how VT operators communicate responsibility towards the projects visited and the needs of the volunteers, and to establish the relationship between responsibility and price signalling. A website content analysis tool was developed for this purpose. It is important to note in advance that the tool does not measure whether these signals are actually practiced by the operators, nor test whether the signals are effective search or purchase attributes. This research examines the ways in which VT is marketed: it is not a review of overall activities.

Content analysis enables constructed identities to be assessed (Pitt and Papania, 2007) by a structured approach via indirect data which that follows minimises the relationship between the researcher and the researched as it “exists regardless of the researcher’s questioning, prompting and probing” (O’Leary, 2010: 208). Content analysis of websites is common practice to understand company (Park and Gretzel, 2007) and destination marketing (Choi, Lehto and Morrison, 2007) as well as sustainability communications (Jose and Lee, 2007). Our research only loosely follows the steps outlined by Neuendorf (2002) and McMillan (2000) to web based content analysis, as these are unnecessarily constraining and prescriptive (Herring, 2010).

We explore the relationship between responsibility and price market signals by using perceptual mapping. This is a technique used to measure and visualise brands’ or products’ positioning by evaluating a set of attributes and assigning scale ratings to plot those attributes diagrammatically. Typically, attributes influence how consumers evaluate and distinguish between brands or products (Shobhit and Dey, 2010). The closer together positioning points are plotted, the more similarly consumers are expected to perceive and respond to brands or products. Conversely, differentiation is represented by points plotted further away from others. Gaps exist where there is a perceived supply void and no competition. Two-by-two attribute perceptual maps present an easy to read mental picture, enabling organisations to identify, compare, correlate and monitor over time competitive

sets' relative strengths and weaknesses and market opportunities to (re)position to potential target market niches with supporting data (Shobhit and Dey, 2010).

The validity of a perceptual map thus depends on the set of attributes and the products and brands selected for study. Frameworks for selection of evaluative attributes, ratings, organisation and web pages must be determined prior to evaluation and analysis. This research is thus both qualitative, based on perceptions of information rather than numerical data, and quantitative, using attributed ratings to compare and contrast positioning of different organisations and products. It must, therefore, be concerned with rigor and standardisation to establish credibility and validity (Herring, 2009).

A new coding scheme was developed since the literature did not reveal any content analysis on VT communications. The International VT Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators (TIES, 2012) were chosen to guide attribute selection. They comprise 32 guidelines, which were translated into the evaluative attributes/dependent variables to rate and rank website content. Nineteen guidelines were considered to be communicable responsibility signals and appropriate for website content analysis. They became the coding categories.

The TIES 2012 *Marketing and Messaging Guidelines (II-2(b))* provide a framework for the variables to be rated and ranked. The first of these guidelines recommends using positive messaging strategies which “clearly convey the goals of VT programs, why they are important and how they make a difference”, supported by concrete examples. The second marketing guideline (*II-2(a)*) suggests to “avoid all forms of poverty marketing - such as using images or words (e.g. “helping people who cannot help themselves”) which belittle or degrade local people”. We created a coding scheme according to the message and evidence portrayed, using the marketing guidelines as a framework. The level of evidence is the commitment behind the signal, and therefore is the signal bond:

- *Evidence-backed*, positive, success and goals-related content: +2
- Positive, success and goals-related content (*but no evidence*): +1
- Neither positive nor negative content, or no content on the issue: 0
- *Suggestion* of poverty marketing: -1
- Clear *publication* of belittling or degrading content: -2

Established methods of content analysis systematically identify specific characteristics of a message (Miller and Salkind, 2002) and provide quantitative measurement of

responsibility signalling through the frequency of appearance of words or themes in text. Automated web crawling has been applied to analyse aggregate term frequencies for keywords together with semantic orientation (whether positive or negative words were nearby the triple bottom line coding units) (Gill, Dickinson and Scharl, 2008). Automated analysis may have advantages in processing large amounts of data; enumerating content frequency and identifying patterns, it largely ignores its extent and may not evaluate the audience impact, “what it feels or believes as a result of the content, or what the content producer intended” (Herring, 2009:2). A ‘referential content analysis’ (Franzosi, 2004) tool is, therefore, required which considers linguistic context to enable qualitative analysis of implicit text and the intended analysis of responsibility within VT web content. We believed that the closer attention to detail of our study warranted its smaller, exploratory scale. The coding units were, therefore, sentences or paragraphs, and not individual words (Budd, Thorp and Donohew, 1967), and more effort was placed in determining the meaning from the context and evidence provided.

Two additional criteria were analysed that the literature suggested may influence the level of responsibility signalled. Organisational model (Commercial operator, NGO or not-for-profit Social Enterprise) was included to analyse whether “the status of the organisation is no guarantee of responsible practice” (Goodwin, 2011: 185). Price was included, and to compare like-with-like, similar project types, destinations and durations were selected, and per-day (mean) average prices considered, to analyse whether responsibility does differentiate positioning and “allow companies to compete on more than just price” (Weeden, 2002: 142).

Sampling is one of the most difficult aspects of web-based content analysis (McMillan, 2000). A non-random sample of UK websites ensures representativeness of organisation type and context, important to interpretation of results (Herring, 2009; O’Leary 2010). The eight organisations are fairly representative of the industry mix: two social enterprises (1_SocEnt and 4_SocEnt), a further social enterprise that is a media organisation acting as a broker (2_SocEnt), one non-governmental organisation (6_NGO), two purely commercial limited companies (5_Com and 8_Com), and two commercial companies offering associated charitable trusts or corporate foundations (3_Com/Char and 7_Com/Char).

There is no consensus on what should be the unit of analysis on web content analysis (McMillan, 2000). Our standard units of context are a sample of pages that could have the

largest audience views and responsibility signalling. The following pages were deemed most appropriate for purposive typical case sampling (O'Leary, 2010):

- Homepage (or Volunteering section homepage for non-volunteer-focused sites)
- Responsible Tourism policy
- 3 products for popular comparable destinations and project types

The organisations market and sell online, not through brochures or travel agents, so an analysis of their websites is pertinent. To book a trip/project would require a consumer to see the project pages. It is true that they may never look at the homepage (although it seems unlikely) nor the Responsible Tourism policy page. Since website structures differ, the content of project or policy "sections" were analysed, disregarding the actual URL navigation, but considering the linked content holistically. Projects were chosen for comparability across organisations, in terms of project types, destinations and durations. Including comparable projects enables the researcher to more easily perceive nuances of responsibility between organisations' content. The intention was to include one project for each of the most popular continent destinations- Asia, Africa and Central/South America (Lasso Communications, 2009) and one for each of the popular project types- Conservation, Community Development and Childcare (GeckoGo, 2009). Projects including extras (e.g. qualifications such as TEFL, or safari extensions) were excluded where a project version existed in that continent without it. Tours that included a similar number of volunteer days to each other were selected, one per continent and per project type.

As website offerings differ greatly, when a directly comparable project was not available, the most similar project was selected as the most likely to have similar cost basis and timescale levels. As durations differ, per-day rates were calculated for comparison. The media organisation (2_SocEnt) projects' pricing data does not include its membership fee (although that, averaged on a per-day basis, would make minimal difference to the cost positioning). As a broker organisation with low intermediary fees, we foresee that prices will be competitive but will provide limited quality assurance in terms of project monitoring, potentially compromising responsibility scores.

All eight company sites were examined in October, 2012, based on their then live pages. The organisations' selected five pages were scored on the 19 selected attributes, each between -2 and +2. Overall negative scores are possible for criteria or pages, since total negatives may outweigh positives. The minimum and maximum scores for each page

theoretically fall between -38 (19 criteria*-2 score) and +38 (19*+2); for each criteria between -10 (5 pages *-2 score) and +10 (5*+2); and for each organisation between -390 (19 criteria*5 pages *-2 score) and +390 (19*5*+2). The resulting 95 negative, positive and neutral data scores per organisation (760 data scores in total), once aggregated often cancel each other out, and therefore do not fall far on either side of zero.

Results

Results show responsibility signals by criteria (table 1) and page (table 2) to summarise key data, and plotted against total price, per day price and organisation type (figures 1, 2, 3, and 4) to allow us to visualise Responsibility Value.

Table 1 presents the scores across all companies. We see low scores are primarily for (8_Com) not thinking “Local Community First” or finding “Appropriate Match” with “Whatever... age, abilities or level of experience...” nor preferred skills over “willing to give a lending hand” (Childcare Kenya page, 2_SocEnt). There is evidence of prioritising volunteers’ needs and desires, with poverty marketing for example in “the infamous townships are full of people desperate to create a better world for their children” (8_Com). This poverty marketing echoes Morgan’s (2010) notion of subordinate community need, with text such as “these children... need extra attention in order to promote their development” (7_Com/Char) yet contradictorily acknowledging “volunteers’ time is relatively short” (7_Com/Char) despite the need to “ensure as much continuity and consistency as is possible” (7_Com/Char).

The poor results in “Interacting with Children” and “Inappropriate Behaviour” suggest VT organisations do not publish strict zero-tolerance policies in order to prevent inappropriate behaviour (TIES Guideline IV-2(e)). They also do not transparently outline a process in which volunteers who do behave unethically can be removed from a project (TIES Guideline III-1(e)). Together with an almost complete absence of positive goals-related and evidence-backed “Needs Assessment” content, this undermines organisations’ seemingly positive information on “Working with Locals”, “Local Community First”, “Show values” and “Lasting Impact”. “Lasting Impact” and “Show values” generally scored well, areas where many of the organisations state intent (+1) without offering supportive evidence (scoring +2), prompting fears about greenwashing. There are few cases of actually including evidence-backed content for “Lasting Impact”- a good practice example is a Costa Rica

Conservation page (3_Com/Char), which explains with data how the project makes a difference in decreased poaching rates and improved protection of habitats as well as international use of the data for species and area management policy development.

“Local Conservation” scores were the best of all criteria, suggesting wildlife and heritage preservation may be easier to develop, manage and/or communicate than other areas of VT. Of concern is a zero score and lack of positive content regarding sexual exploitation, background checks and interacting with children on all pages, particularly the Childcare project page, and zero score for “Local Community First” on the Community Development Thailand project (4_SocEnt).

*** insert table 1

Table 2 shows that some policies are not carried through to the products’ pages (particularly 7_Com/Char, 3_Com/Char, 8_Com), while two companies had higher results on the product pages than in their overall policy page (5_Com, 4_SocEnt). There are contradictions that suggest responsibility is more in policy than product design, and therefore greenwashing is taking place. “You’ll normally teach alone without a teaching assistant” despite not requiring “any formal teaching qualifications or a TEFL certificate, nor... previous teaching experience” scores -2 in ‘Working with Locals’ (8_Com). However, the same page scores positively for “Local Community First” and “Lasting Impact” with its explanation of how local education needs can lead local people to better futures.

Relatively high scores on responsible tourism policy aren’t substantiated by any transparent reporting (financial or otherwise). We see promotion of a non-profit foundation with little transparency on how donations are spent (7_Com/Char), while not-for-profit organisation 4_SocEnt ought to be demonstrating maximum scores for evidence-backed financial transparency in “Donations” and “Money per trip”, so volunteers can see destinations’ financial benefits.

The consequences of limiting the research to five pages was evident in finding that the top performer (1_SocEnt) had a low score on “Inappropriate Behaviour”, “Sexual Exploitation”, “Interacting with Children” only because it had an unlinked specific Child Protection Policy page. Additionally, overall intent is communicated in the Policy but it is not carried through to product-specific communication. For example 3_Com/Char won a

Responsible Tourism Award for Best Volunteering Organisation and yet fails to score well for “Social Impact” of “Working with locals”, “Sexual exploitation”, “Background checks” and “Interacting with Children”, across all pages, and “Selecting and Working with Volunteers” on its Childcare South Africa and Community Development Thailand pages. However, this highlights the importance of linking relevant information: Without it, consumers may perceive a different level of Responsibility Value and bond than the organisation actually offers.

*** insert table 2

Some organisations have little control over the quality of their products, which is of concern in itself. 2_SocEnt only has control on the content of its Home and Policy pages: it is a media facilitator, providing a platform where other projects create their own content and can make contact directly with volunteers. Despite set product page content and standards, it is not surprising that content on project pages may score inconsistently, and may not even reflect the organisation’s Policy, as is evident on the Childcare Kenya content score. 5_Com also gets marked down for its Community Development Thailand and Childcare Kenya content. It scores negatively for “Interacting with Children”, due to its degrading statement that while parents “go out to work in the fields or local markets” volunteers can step in to offer “the essential attention and love that these children need”. Their defence is that “The information on our website comes directly from the projects and we work with them to ensure this information is as accurate as possible”, but perhaps the nuance of language/suggestion is not translated well and 5_Com should take the lead with amending any condescending content and improve childcare-related criteria content.

The concept of Responsibility Value maps the level of responsibility demonstrated by page content against the trip’s per-day price. If operators perceive responsibility as part of quality that customers will demand or expect, the results should display a parallelism between price and responsibility. The eight organisations’ criteria scores for each product page have been aggregated and plotted against the total price of the trip. As trip durations differ, for comparability the size of the bubble constitutes the per-day price.

*** insert figure 1

Figure 1 presents the relation of price and business model against Conservation South/Central America projects, which we saw in Table 2 were the type of projects with the highest responsibility scores. 8_Com has the highest total (£1545) and per-day (£110.36) costs along with the lowest perceived level of responsibility (-2), and the lowest Responsibility Value. Although 1_SocEnt's total trip costs are second highest (£1340) it conversely offers the best Responsibility Value, with the highest perceived level of responsibility (8) for its below average price per day (£47.86). 7_Com/Char and 6_NGO may want to consider their identical positioning, especially given the little cost differentiation with 5_Com which is portrayed to have a higher Responsibility Value. It is worth noting that the equal positioning of 7_Com/Char and 6_NGO in Figure 1 does not display well and may lead to confusion. Once again this supports the notion that business model type is no guarantee of responsibility (Goodwin, 2011; 7.3) but that using responsibility as a differentiator for perceived charitable image can offer considerable value. Being virtually identical in total trip (£699) and per-day costs (£46.60 v. £49.93), 5_Com could be using its greater perceived responsibility to give it the edge in attracting potential volunteers.

Finally, positioned equally in responsibility, (all scoring 7) are 2_SocEnt, 3_Com/Char, 4_SocEnt and 5_Com. The differentiating factor is total and per-day prices: 2_SocEnt prices are much lower but the media organisation does not support would-be volunteers logistically, who may therefore prefer to organise their placement through the next cheapest organisation offering support, 5_Com. With higher costs but the same Responsibility Value, 3_Com/Char and 4_SocEnt would need other differentiating factors (such as brand and reputation) to gain the business.

*** insert figure 2.

Similar positioning is demonstrated by mapping scores for the Asia Community Development (Figure 2). The organisations tend to score lower on Responsibility than the Central/South American Conservation content, with the exception of 8_Com due to higher scores in "Local Community First and "Lasting Impact". Although per-day prices for Asia Community Development projects are lower on average (£45.74) than the Central/South America Conservation (£61.70) and Childcare Africa (£65.24) trips, 7_Com/Char (£73.27 per-

day) and 3_Com/Char (£71.07), whilst scoring lower for responsibility are also disproportionately more expensive, displaying an inverse relationship between price and responsibility (figures 1, 2 and 4). 1_SocEnt, at a mid-range price per day but high responsibility score, and 2_SocEnt, with a lower responsibility score but the cheapest, demonstrate the highest Responsibility Value.

*** insert figure 3.

A similar pattern is exhibited in the Childcare in Africa projects but with responsibility levels on average lower (see figure 3) and price levels on average higher, supporting the notion of no responsibility signalling. It is concerning that Childcare projects in Africa score poorly for “Sexual Exploitation” (6_NGO), “Interacting with Children” (2_SocEnt and 6_NGO) and “Background Checks” (2_SocEnt and 6_NGO). 8_Com and 7_Com/Char offer the highest prices with the lowest responsibility (-2 and -1 respectively) and thus the lowest Responsibility Value. In the case of 7_Com/Char this may be because being a traditional tour operator with a small volunteering section, their cost structure may differ considerably. 1_SocEnt offers the best Responsibility Value again, with the highest responsibility score combined with one of the most competitive per-day prices (£55.18). Again, there is little differentiation between 3_Com/Char, 4_SocEnt and 5_Com in particular, with similar responsibility levels, total and per-day prices.

*** insert figure 4

By aggregating each organisation’s scores for responsibility content, plotted against the average price per day of trips, the overall perceived Responsibility Value position for each organisation can be demonstrated (see figure 4). 1_SocEnt (+46) is positioned at the upper end of “Marketing Responsibility”. This supports their claim of “truly accountable, ethical, responsible volunteer travel” and justifies their contribution into writing the TIES VT Guidelines. 1_SocEnt showcase best practice and set a benchmark. While 3_Com/Char (+23) still has some way to go to match 1_SocEnt, however it does appear to be above the market average, all be it at a more premium price. Also scoring (+23) 2_SocEnt has its own

niche, displaying relatively good responsibility and low price, differentiating itself from the tour operators in its media social enterprise model.

At the other end of the scale, 8_Com's responsibility in content and marketing falls far short (-3) of other seemingly similar organisations, including 3_Com/Char (23), 4_SocEnt (20), 5_Com (20) and 6_NGO (18). Alarming, even 7_Com/Char (10), a tour and not volunteer-focused business, is perceived better in responsibility than 8_Com, a VT specialist. Given 7_Com/Char's overland tour focus with volunteering added, its lower score is perhaps less surprising. However, an organisation which is visibly trying to shape VT guidelines, 7_Com/Char needs to make large improvements if its involvement in suggested industry standards is to be credible and not appear as greenwashing.

Discussion

Insights gleaned from the content analysis research include recurring themes related to marketing responsibly: the overall low industry performance, the selective promotion of attractive aspects of responsibility, the inconclusive differentiation by type of company, and the inverse relation between responsibility and price.

First, there is overall low performance on the extended marketing mix that relates to responsibility. This may respond to what is called the first gap in service quality between what the customer expects in responsibility, and what the manager perceived this customer expects, or it is possible that some of these companies have very good practices, but have failed to see the need or benefit of communicating them (the third gap in the service quality model, see Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985). This would be partly explained by the arguably higher performing companies who do not signal convincingly (lack of evidence of the impact achieved from being a more responsible VT operator and lack of using sufficiently differentiating signals, such as independent certification or winning awards). An alternative explanation is that commodifying this industry has widened the gap between volunteer expectations and skills, and the marketing messages of volunteering organisers (Palacios, 2010; Raymond and Hall, 2008) to an extent that messages are now focusing on the experience of a volunteer holiday, with only some vague information on the impact one is supposed to make. 1_SocEnt may stand out with the highest responsibility score of 46, but the range is from +390 to -390. There is room for improvement across the sector to highlight responsibility as central to the product sold and services offered. Other Ps in the

extended marketing mix, such as People, Processes and Physical Evidence also need to be considered. This extended responsibility signalling is required for social marketing.

People-related criteria explored in the research are amongst the worst scoring, for example ensuring “Appropriate Match” of people and skills, support for “Special Needs”, and implementing zero tolerance policies for inappropriate behaviour with “Interacting with Children”. This is also true of associated Processes, whether it be for “Selecting and Working with Volunteers”, doing “Background Checks” and dealing with “Inappropriate Behaviour” or community-side “Needs Assessments”. While positive and goals-related content is included on many pages, few +2 scores show physical evidence is on the whole lacking, especially in the ‘Working with Volunteers’, reporting (financial and non-) and social impacts. Only 6 page criteria out of the entire 760 score +2 (1_SocEnt on five occasions, and 3_Com/Char on one). This demonstrates that transparency and evidence-backed content is seriously absent across the sample, presenting low bond signals of +1 instead.

VT must encompass the need for, and continuity of, placements with clear local benefits and planning, contact between projects and volunteers and the necessary standards of business practises and processes to steer positive impacts, plus marketing to transparently communicate the reality of a destination and its objectives if it is to realistically manage expectations and make VT “viable for all”. Currently, there is little evidence to support this (Taillon and Jamal, 2008; Tomazos and Cooper, 2012). The TIES Guidelines (TIES, 2012) on which the research and tool is based thus support this ‘total marketing’ and ‘real’ positioning based on a Unique Selling Proposition holistic approach (Kotler and Lee, 2009), without which VT ignores complexities of development, skills requirements and cultural sensitivities (Simpson, 2004).

Second, responsibility communication depends on the complexity of the issue, with companies choosing to communicate not what is arguably most important, but what is easiest and most attractive. The best scores are for the easier to communicate ‘Conservation in Central/South America’ in particular ‘Local Conservation’ suggesting that responsibility in that area is easier to develop, manage and/or demonstrate than other areas of VT- the quantitative examples of impact came from measuring biodiversity, or species preserved, rather than for example capacity building. However the related criteria for ‘Respect Wildlife’ and ‘Respect Heritage’ do not score nearly as well, suggesting that organisations may be better at communicating the ‘big idea’ as opposed to the specifics.

Likewise, the 'Local Community First', 'Lasting Impact' and 'Show Values' criteria score best, but lack detailed reporting of local community related criteria such as 'Needs Assessments' and 'Impacts'.

Further evidence supporting this point is the low scoring criteria of 'Appropriate recruitment' and 'Interacting with Children' and the lower overall performance of the Africa Childcare projects, the pinnacle of volunteering humanitarianism (Mostafanezhad, 2013). Socio-cultural related issues such as humanitarian projects, teaching and community development, the first, third and fourth most popular VT preferences according to GeckoGo (2009) tend to score less well. The low-scoring criteria are those largely concerned with recruitment of appropriate volunteers and volunteering with children, both of which can have hugely damaging consequences if badly managed such as long term psychosocial vulnerability and sexual exploitation (Goodwin, 2011; Mostafanezhad, 2013; Reas, 2013; Tomazos and Butler, 2012). This study confirms the findings from Callanan and Thomas (2005), who found that promotional material for "shallow VT projects" focused on the destination and the experiences, while "deep VT projects" emphasised the project and the impact of volunteering (and would require higher signalling bonds).

Third, although "the brand and image value of being a non-profit or charitable organization is considerable" (Tomazos and Butler, 2009a:207), the data confirms that "the status of the organisation is no guarantee of responsible practice" (Goodwin, 2011:185). It is true that social enterprises overall outscore both straight commercial operators and the two commercial operators with charitable foundations attached. Social enterprises may score better because they reduce the dislocation between revenue generation and impact by minimising costs of the UK operations, with most money being spent (80% for 1_SocEnt) and any profits reinvested in destination (Mdee and Emmott, 2008). One would, therefore, expect social enterprises to demonstrate evidence-backed financial transparency, such as in the 'Donations' and 'Money per trip' criteria, appealing to volunteers who prefer financial benefits to accrue to destinations, but while 1_SocEnt do, others such as 4_SocEnt do not (see table 1). Commercial operators with charitable arms would be expected to outperform straight commercial operators. And 6_NGO VT would rightly be expected to be philanthropic, decommodified and thus the most Responsible compared to commercial VT (Wearing, McDonald and Ponting, 2005). Signalling theory has assumed that businesses have the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate the bond- in our case

responsibility performance (Herzberg, 1966; Prakash, 2002), but we cannot necessarily assume this in small firms, or indeed non-commercial organisations who do not have the marketing communication skills. This is where additional data comparing responsibility management (i.e. actual bond) with responsibility signalling (ability to communicate that bond) would provide more explanation.

Fourth, price and responsibility display an inverse relationship (figure 4). The data suggests that responsibility is not a quality signal (Zeithaml, 1988), or at least not in the strict sense as it would then result in a price premium in market conditions. The current wide range of prices suggests that customers rate their experience of volunteering against attributes other than responsibility, or that responsibility has a consequential rather than causal relationship to price (i.e. higher prices are assumed to be more responsible without having to signal it). Quality in the researched volunteer market is not related to the price charged nor financial viability (Benson and Henderson, 2011). And there is little transparency on where the fees go - of 40 companies studied by Tomazos & Cooper (2012), only 18 provided any information- but no hard evidence.

Content analysis is one of the best methods to find data that is less conditioned by the researcher's initial expectations or hypotheses (Kim and Kuljis, 2010). We did not expect that the results would show perceptual maps with responsibility and price signalling being diametrically opposed, and there is no easy way of explaining why. If responsibility was a hygiene factor it would not motivate but it would prevent dissatisfaction, and therefore responsibility would be price neutral (Herzberg, 1966; Prakash, 2002). The inverse relation between responsibility signalling and price suggests that responsibility is not promoted as part of brand credibility (Erdem, Swait and Louviere, 2002). This is also because the more commercial organisations also tend to be those charging higher per-day prices *and* have lower levels of responsibility signalling, but content analysis alone cannot tell us why.

The TIES VT Guidelines (2012) make no suggestion on pricing strategies. However, in responsible tourism there needs to be "fair economic transaction in which the advantages and disadvantages are equally distributed" between both parties (Krippendorf, 1996:114). Social marketing uses the marketing mix including price to elicit market change for stakeholders to adopt sustainable behaviours (Dinan and Sargeant, 2000; Kotler and Lee, 2009). The organisations researched offer superficially similar projects and destinations. However, pricing differs greatly, and if all organisations operate on a similar cost structure

of logistics and support (which 1_SocEnt transparently publishes, at least 80% of which is spent in the host country), pricing differences could be indicative of profit margins. This would suggest therefore that organisations prioritising their responsibility attributes have lower profit margins. Another explanation would be a trade-off between altruistic volunteering and tourism hedonism, and between altruism and profit, inferring the more hedonism involved, the less altruism, the more profit (Tomazos and Butler, 2009b).

Volunteers' factors for choosing where to go in order of importance include Price, Reputation of Organization, Unique experience, Convenience, Personal learning experience and Usefulness of project (GeckoGo, 2009). Consumers may be willing to pay a premium if it is justified, perceiving value in higher prices and high-involvement purchases such as those with personal relevance or a high degree of risk (Dinan and Sargeant, 2000) and companies with undifferentiated products will invest in brand equity to justify higher prices (Keller, 1993). However, VT is primarily a market for first time buyers who have a high perception of risk, and "have been 'coerced' into making the 'right' choice in tune with the times and usually this means a more expensive choice" (Tomazos and Butler, 2009b:3, see also Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore attributes preferred by a large proportion of the market are more self-centred, emphasising the customer experience while idealising and simplifying the altruistic benefits of volunteering (Wearing, 2001). The data therefore suggests that responsibility is not a search attribute, because tourists cannot objectively assess it before purchase and it is rarely a reason for choosing a supplier. It is also imperfectly observable after a relatively long usage history and therefore a *credence* good rather than an experience good. The result is a pooling equilibrium - the gains of falsely signalling that responsibility is practiced outweigh the potential losses from possibly being discovered (Kirmani and Rao, 2000; Spence, 1973).

Conclusion

Responsible marketing is a key on the path towards sustainability due to its influence on consumer demands, (mis)conceptions and consequent implications on the product's socio-cultural environment (Krippendorf, 1987). The increasing commodification of VT requires that the role that marketing plays in fulfilling customer expectations at the expense of the communities be questioned, (Lyons *et al.*, 2012). Signalling theory was helpful to examine

the communication of responsibility by VT operators. It is worth reflecting on its value but also on its limitations.

First, the theory assumes that there is a sufficient number of signals within the appropriate cost range. The wide range of responsibility practices applicable to VT guarantees this, and VT operators may want to signal not with broad statements of being responsible or sustainable, but with specific evidence of exemplary practice in specific aspects that resonate with their target market. This would reduce market confusion from vague claims (Simpson, 2004); for signalling to work, a segment of the target market needs to interpret the signal as an observable attribute of quality (Kirmani and Rao, 2000; Spence, 1973). Alternatively voluntary codes of practice and industry-wide regulation could include minimum signalling standards (Mdee and Emmott, 2008; Ong *et al.*, 2013).

Second, making changes to these signals needs to be sufficiently costly to differentiate between business offers (Ippolito, 1990). This is hardly the case as our study shows that few companies see the need to substantiate their claims with evidence (necessary to get a +2 score for any item). Currently we find confused positioning, weak differentiation and greenwashing, thus responsibility communications are easy to copy and commodify (Simpson, 2004; Mdee and Emmott, 2008). Signalling costs are usually determined by the high quality firm that determines what signals will differentiate them. The closest current examples would be international awards, certification, endorsements or partnerships.

Third, signalling can have a positive effect if the number of businesses signalling is a minority- in our study we have very few cases of a conscientious approach to using responsibility as part of the brand and image, while those signalling do not follow up with increased prices. The ineffectiveness of volunteering (Brown and Hall, 2008) and the limited importance of the impact of the volunteering trip on the host community in the search attributes (Grimm and Needham, 2012) would justify toning down the aid language in marketing for the majority of operators, in favour of communicating that volunteering fosters international understanding (Palacios, 2010; Raymond and Hall, 2008). This would leave space for VT pioneers to signal credibly with less background noise.

It is worth noting the research limitations. First and foremost, the content analysis of these websites only studies the image projected by these companies. Second, content analysis gives us patterns from which speculative answers can be put forward (Holsti, 1969), and as such it works well to infer but it is not conclusive. Third, counting features on a

website does not indicate the use of the site or the credibility of its content to its users (Law, Qi and Buhalis, 2010). Fourth, the use of TIES volunteering guidelines and subsequent operationalization and coding scheme suggests normative or desirable characteristics of VT, and it is acknowledged that other authors using different approaches or codes of conduct could come up with different interpretations. Fifth, in some cases it was necessary to compare similar projects in a neighbouring country which may reduce the research validity.

Finally, we would like to reflect on the research impact. All the companies whose web sites were studied were sent the results and given the opportunity to learn from them. While the lowest performing business threatened with a law suit for being defamatory (and hence we have anonymised all the companies), two companies ignored our results, three were happy to review and discuss, and another two responded very positively: “we have used... unbiased and clear pointers for where we could do better to readdress and redesign our homepage to ensure that our message is more accessible, transparent and user friendly” (1_SocEnt), “has enabled us to identify possible areas of improvement to create a better online experience for our online users” (2_SocEnt), “we found the analysis and industry benchmarking to be very valuable and as a direct result of the work and a follow up consultation we have identified a number of changes to make” (4_SocEnt), and “I am impressed that from an external viewpoint this insightful paper has accurately identified and highlighted a number of issues we are addressing with the next iteration of our website” (3_Com/Char). While the comments came from the four top scorers, this gives us hope for the improved use of responsibility as a market signal that successfully differentiates high performing VT operators. It also points out a potential way forward for researchers in sustainable tourism to work with business for the benefit of all.

References

- Bagwell, K., & Riordan, M. H. (1991) High and declining prices signal product quality. *The American Economic Review*, 81 (1), 224-239.
- Becker-Olsen, K. L., Cudmore, B. A., & Hill, R. P. (2006) The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 59 (1), 46-53.
- Belz, F. M., & Peattie, K. (2012) *Sustainability marketing: a global perspective*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

- Benson, A. M., & Henderson, S. (2011) A strategic analysis of volunteer tourism organisations. *The Service Industries Journal*, 31 (3), 405-424.
- Brown, F., & Hall, D. (2008) Tourism and Development in the Global South: the issues. *Third World Quarterly*, 29 (5), 839-849.
- Budd, R. W., Thorp, R. K., & Donohew, L. (1967) *Content analysis of communications*. New York: Macmillan.
- Callanan, M., & Thomas, S. (2005) *Volunteer tourism: Deconstructing volunteer activities within a dynamic environment*. In M. Novelli (Ed.), *Niche tourism: Contemporary issues, trends and cases* (pp. 183-200). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Choi, S., Lehto, X. Y., & Morrison, A. M. (2007) Destination image representation on the web: Content analysis of Macau travel related websites. *Tourism Management*, 28 (1), 118-129.
- Coghlan, A. (2007). Towards an Integrated Image-based Typology of Volunteer Tourism Organisations. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15 (3), 267-286.
- Cohen, E. (1988) Authenticity and commoditization in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15 (3), 371-386.
- Crossley, É. (2012) Poor but happy: Volunteer tourists' encounters with poverty. *Tourism Geographies*, 14 (2), 235-253.
- Dann, G. M. S. (1996) Greenspeak: An Analysis of the Language of Eco-tourism. *Progress in Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2 (3/4), 247-260.
- Dodds, W. B., & Monroe, K. B. (1985) The effect of brand and price information on subjective product evaluations. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12 (1), 85-90.
- Erdem, T., Swait, J., & Louviere, J. (2002) The impact of brand credibility on consumer price sensitivity. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 19 (1), 1-19.
- Franzosi, R. (2004). *Content Analysis*. In Hardy, M., & Bryman, A. *Handbook of Data Analysis* (pp. 547-565). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- GeckoGo (2009). Volunteer Travel Insights 2009. Retrieved from GeckoGo.com:
http://www.geckogo.com/volunteer/report2009/GeckoGo-Volunteer_Travel_Insights_2009.pdf
- Gill, D. L., Dickinson, S. J., & Scharl, A. (2008) Communicating sustainability: a web content analysis of North American, Asian and European firms. *Journal of Communication Management*, 12 (3), 243-262.

- Goodwin, H. (2011) *Taking responsibility for tourism*. Oxford: Goodfellow Publishers.
- Govers, R., & Go, F. M. (2005) Projected destination image online: Website content analysis of pictures and text. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 7 (2), 73-89.
- Grabowski, S., Wearing, S., & Lee, D. (2007). Coming Home to Culture Shock: A Preliminary Analysis of Volunteer Experiences. The Voluntourist Newsletter [Internet], 4 (1) n.d., Retrieved from:
http://www.volunteer_tourism.org/news-studyandresearch41.htm
- Grant, J. (2007) *The green marketing manifesto*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Grimm, K. E., & Needham, M. D. (2012) Internet promotional material and conservation volunteer tourist motivations: A case study of selecting organizations and projects. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 1 (1), 17-27.
- Herring, S. C. (2010) *Web content analysis: Expanding the paradigm*. In J. Hunsinger, M. Allen, & L. Klasturp (Eds.), *International handbook of Internet research* (pp. 233-249). Berlin: Springer.
- Herzberg, F. I. (1966) *Work and the nature of man*. New York: World Publishing Company.
- Hirschman, E. C., & Holbrook, M. B. (1982) Hedonic consumption: emerging concepts, methods and propositions. *The Journal of Marketing*, 46 (3), 92-101.
- Holsti, O. R. (1969) *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Ippolito, P. M. (1990) Bonding and nonbonding signals of product quality. *Journal of Business*, 63 (1), 41-60.
- Jose, A., & Lee, S.-M. (2007) Environmental reporting of global corporations: a content analysis based on website disclosures. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 72 (4), 307-321.
- Keese, J. R. (2011) The geography of volunteer tourism: Place matters. *Tourism Geographies*, 13 (2), 257-279.
- Keller, K. L. (1993) Conceptualizing, measuring and managing customer-based brand equity. *The Journal of Marketing*, 57 (1), 1-22.
- Kim, I., & Kuljis, J. (2010) *Applying content analysis to web based content*, *Information Technology Interfaces (ITI)*, 2010 32nd International Conference on (pp. 283-288): IEEE.
- Kirmani, A., & Rao, A. R. (2000) No pain, no gain: A critical review of the literature on signalling unobservable product quality. *The Journal of Marketing*, 64 (2), 66-79.

- Kotler, P., & Zaltman, G. (1971). Social Marketing: An Approach to Social Change. *Journal of Marketing*, 35 (3), 8-12.
- Kotler, P., & Lee, N. R. (2011) *Social marketing: Influencing behaviors for good*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Kotler, P., & Lee, N.R. (2009). *Up and Out of Poverty: The Social Marketing Solution*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Krippendorff, J. (1987). *The Holiday Makers: Understanding the Impact if Leisure and Travel*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Lasso Communications (2009). State of the Volunteer Travel Industry. Retrieved from Volunteer tourismGal.com:
<http://volunteer-tourismgal.files.wordpress.com/2009/05/state-of-the-volunteer-travel-industry-20093.pdf>
- Law, R., Qi, S., & Buhalis, D. (2010) Progress in tourism management: A review of website evaluation in tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 31 (3), 297-313.
- Lyons, K., Hanley, J., Wearing, S., & Neil, J. (2012) Gap year volunteer tourism: Myths of Global Citizenship? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39 (1), 361-378.
- McGehee, N., & Clemmons, D. (2008). Initial Thoughts and Reflections on The Voluntourist Survey. The Voluntourist Newsletter, 4(2) n.d., Retrieved from:
<http://www.volunteer-tourism.org/news-studyandresearch42.htm>
- McMillan, S. J. (2000) The microscope and the moving target: The challenge of applying content analysis to the World Wide Web. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77 (1), 80-98.
- Mdee, A., & Emmott, R. (2008) Social enterprise with international impact: the case for Fair Trade certification of volunteer tourism. *Education, Knowledge & Economy*, 2 (3), 191-201.
- Milgrom, P., & Roberts, J. (1986) Price and advertising signals of product quality. *The Journal of Political Economy*, 94 (4), 796-821.
- Miller, D. C., & Salkind, N. J. (2002) *Handbook of research design and social measurement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Morgan, J (2010). Volunteer Tourism: What Are The Benefits For International Development? The Voluntourist Newsletter, 6(2) n.d., Retrieved from:
<http://www.volunteer-tourism.org/news-studyandresearch62.htm>

- Mostafanezhad, M. (2013) The Geography of Compassion in Volunteer Tourism. *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 15 (2), 318-337.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2002) *The content analysis guidebook*. London: Sage.
- O'Leary, Z. (2010). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Ong, F., Pearlman, M., Lockstone-Binney, L., & King, B. (2013) Virtuous volunteer tourism: Towards a uniform code of conduct. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 16 (1), 72-86.
- Palacios, C. M. (2010) Volunteer tourism, development and education in a postcolonial world: conceiving global connections beyond aid. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18 (7), 861-878.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985) A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *The Journal of Marketing*, 49 (4), 41-50.
- Park, Y. A., & Gretzel, U. (2007) Success factors for destination marketing web sites: a qualitative meta-analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46 (1), 46-63.
- Patterson, P. G. (1993) Expectations and product performance as determinants of satisfaction for a high-involvement purchase. *Psychology & Marketing*, 10 (5), 449-465.
- Pitt, L., & Papania, L. (2007) In the words: Managerial approaches to exploring corporate intended image through content analysis. *Journal of General Management*, 32 (4), 1-16.
- Prakash, A. (2002) Green marketing, public policy and managerial strategies. *Business strategy and the environment*, 11 (5), 285-297.
- Raymond, E. M., & Hall, C. M. (2008) The development of cross-cultural (mis) understanding through volunteer tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16 (5), 530-543.
- Reas, P. J. (2013) 'Boy, have we got a vacation for you': Orphanage Tourism in Cambodia and the Commodification and Objectification of the Orphaned Child. *Thammasat Review*, 16 (1), 121-139.
- Shobhit, A., & Dey, A.K. (2010). Perception Mapping of Travellers: Case of Six Indian Domestic Airlines. *American Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, 2 (2), 141-146.

- Simpson, K. (2004) 'Doing development': The gap year, volunteer-tourists and a popular practice of development. *Journal of International Development*, 16 (5), 681-692.
- Sin, H. L. (2009) Volunteer tourism- "involve me and I will learn"? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36 (3), 480-501.
- Spence, M. (1973) Job market signalling. *The quarterly journal of Economics*, 87 (3), 355-374.
- Taillon, J., & Jamal, T. (2008). Understanding The Volunteer Tourist: A Qualitative Inquiry. *The Voluntourist Newsletter*, 4(4) n.d., Retrieved from:
http://www.volunteer_tourism.org/news-studyandresearch44.htm
- Taplin, J., Dredge, D. and Scherrer, P. (2014) Monitoring and Evaluating Volunteer Tourism: A Review and Analytical Framework *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22 (4) in press
- Teas, R. K., & Agarwal, S. (2000) The effects of extrinsic product cues on consumers' perceptions of quality, sacrifice, and value. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (2), 278-290.
- TIES (2012). *International Volunteer tourism Guidelines for Commercial Tour Operators*. Washington, DC: The International Ecotourism Society.
- Tomazos, K., & Butler, R. (2009a). Volunteer Tourism: The New Ecotourism? *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20 (1), 196-211.
- Tomazos, K., & Butler, R. (2009b). Volunteer Tourism: Working on Holiday or Playing at Work. *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 4 (4), 331-349.
- Tomazos, K., & Butler, R. (2012) Volunteer tourists in the field: A question of balance? *Tourism Management*, 33 (1), 177-187.
- Tomazos, K., & Cooper, W. (2012) Volunteer tourism: at the crossroads of commercialisation and service? *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15 (5), 405-423.
- Von der Weppen, J., & Cochrane, J. (2012). Social enterprises in tourism: an exploratory study of operational models and success factors. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20 (3), 497-511.
- Wearing, S. (2001). *Volunteer Tourism: Seeking Experiences that Make a Difference*. Wallingford: CAB International.
- Wearing, S., McDonald, M., & Ponting, J. (2005). Building a Decommodified Research Paradigm in Tourism: The Contribution of NGOs. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 13 (5), 424-439.

- Weeden, C. (2002). Ethical Tourism: An Opportunity for Competitive Advantage? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8 (2), 141-153.
- Wolinsky, A. (1983) Prices as signals of product quality. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 50 (4), 647-658.
- Zeithaml, V. A. (1988) Consumer perceptions of price, quality, and value: a means-end model and synthesis of evidence. *The Journal of Marketing*, 52 (3), 2-22.

Table 1. Responsibility per criteria and company

TIES Guideline #			1_SocEnt	2_SocEnt	3_Com/Char	4_SocEnt	5_Com	6_NGO	7_Com/Char	8_Com	Average (max +10, min -10)
Sustainable Management	I-1(a)	Local Community First							3	4	.0
	I-1(b)	Lasting Impact								1	.9
Selecting and Working with Volunteers	I-3(a)	Appropriate match							2	3	.3
	I-3(b)	Clear goals & objectives								1	.5
	I-3(d)	Special needs									.0
	I-3(f)	Alternative ways to contribute									.0
	I-3(f)										.9
Defining Success & Measuring Impact	II-1(e)	Inappropriate behaviour									.0
Transparency in Financial Reporting	II-2(a)	Money per trip								1	.8
	II-2(b)	Donations									.0
Transparency in Non-Financial Reporting	II-3(a)	Impacts									.0
	II-3(b)	Needs Assessments									.8
	II-3(c)	Show values									.0
Managing Social and Economic Impacts	V-2(a)	Working with locals								1	.8
	V-2(c)	Sexual exploitation									.0
	V-2(d)	Background checks		2							.4
	V-2(e)	Interacting with children		2			2		1		.0
	V-2(e)										.5
Supporting Biodiversity & Heritage	V-3(a)	Local conservation									-
	V-3(b)	Respect heritage									0.6
	V-3(c)	Respect wildlife									.3
	V-3(c)										.1
(max +390, min -390) Aggregate			6	3	3	0	0	8	0	3	9.6

Table 2. Responsibility per page and company

	1_SocEnt	2_SocEnt	3_Com/Char	4_SocEnt	5_Com	6_NGO	7_Com/Char	8_Com	Average (max +38, min -38)
Home page								2	1.6
RT policy	2								5.6
Americas (conservation)								2	5.5
Asia (community)	0						1		3.5
Africa (childcare)	1						1	2	3.1
Aggregate (max +390, min -390)	6	3	3	0	0	8	0	3	9.6
Average price per day	48	19	72	57	48	47	80	87	£57

Figure 1: Conservation Central/South America Responsibility vs Price

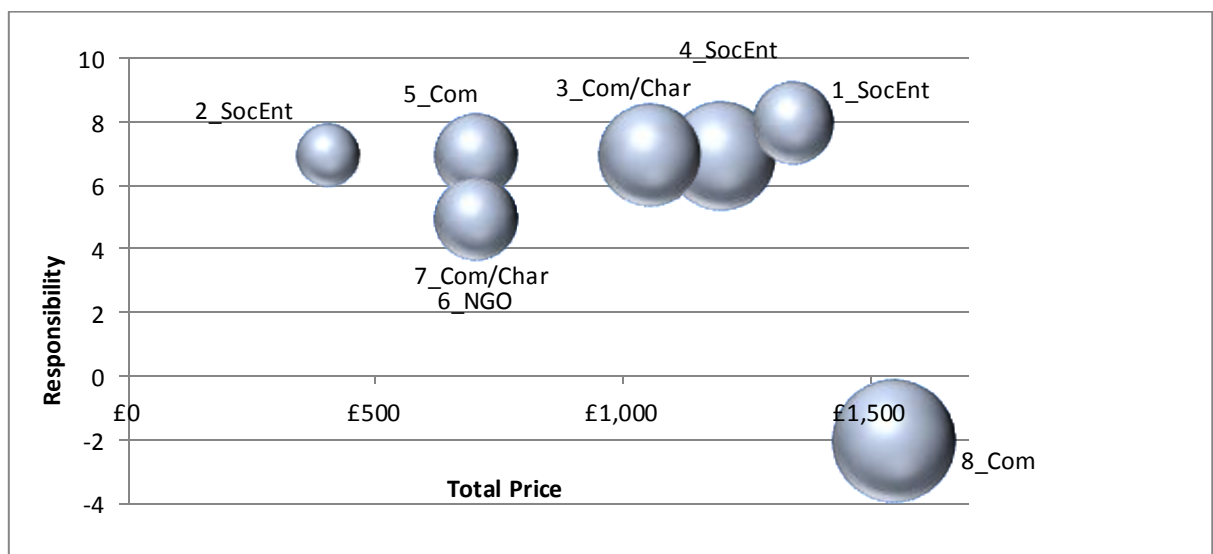


Figure 2: Community Development Asia Responsibility v Price

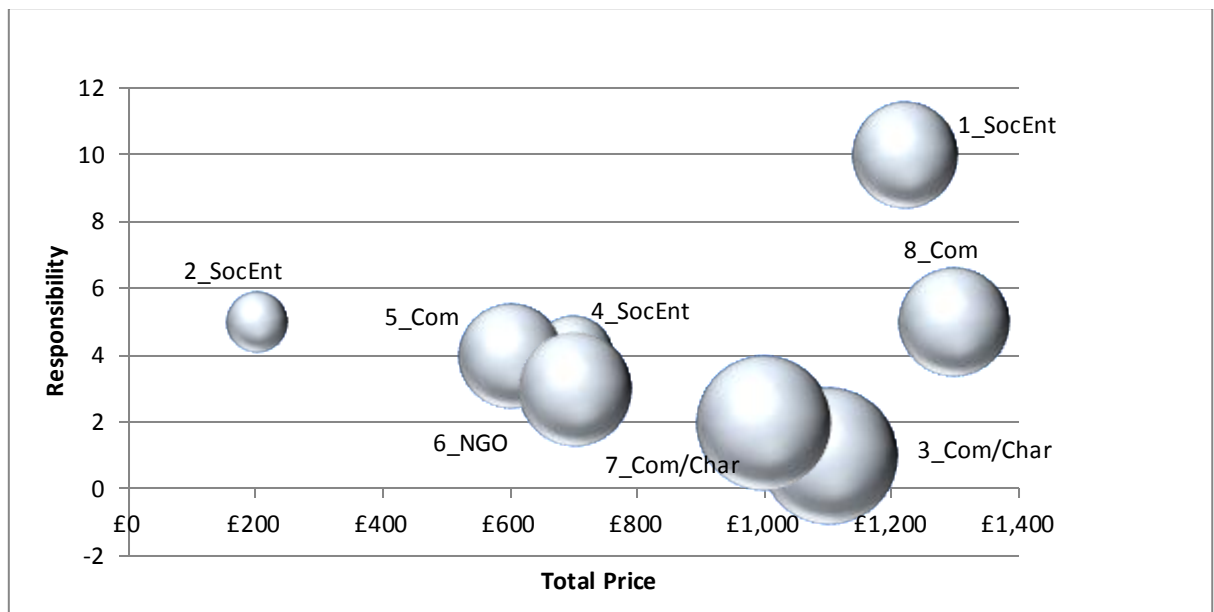


Figure 3: Childcare Africa Responsibility v Price

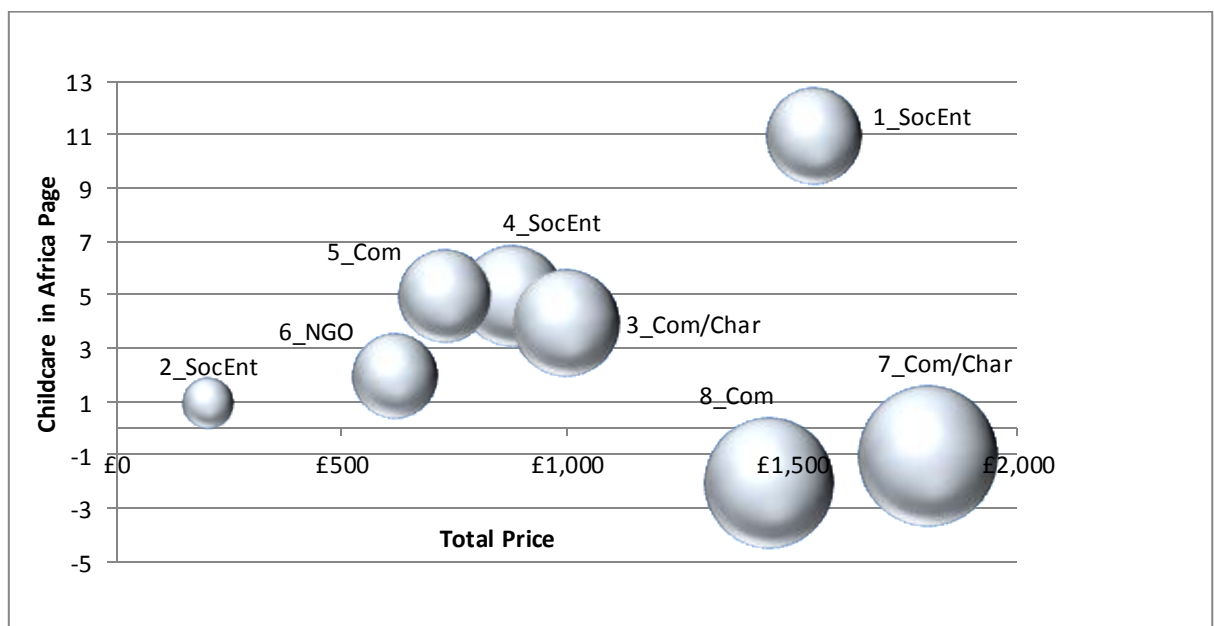


Figure 4: Responsible Value vs Price (Average per Day)

